



**NORTHAMPTON**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Item No.

**9**

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<b>Name of Committee</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Customer and Service Delivery</b>
<b>Corporate Manager:</b>	<b>Fran Rodgers</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> July, 2007</b>

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Homeless Prevention: Leasing of NBC properties to supporting people partners to provide appropriate housing and support to vulnerable clients.</b>
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<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
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## **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1** That cabinet agree to provide up to 12 units of council accommodation per financial year for lease to partner support organisations and/or RSLs that offer tenancy support to vulnerable clients.
- 1.2** That the units will be bed-sits or one-bedroom accommodation only, not family units. Leases will be drawn up for up to a maximum of a 5-year period at NBC set rent level.

## **2. Summary**

- 2.1** Northampton's Housing Strategy places great emphasis on partnership arrangements with organisations that offer tenancy support.
- 2.2** Providing a range of models of supported housing strengthens the homeless prevention agenda and allows access into appropriately supported housing for clients who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness.
- 2.3** As an example, in 2000 NBC agreed a partnership arrangement with Northamptonshire Probation Service and Stonham Housing Association. The agreement was to lease 4 units of accommodation to Stonham for the purpose of providing a supported housing environment to ex offenders who were at risk of homelessness on release from prison. The Scheme has proved successful and the Probation Service, Stonham and Supporting People now wish to

expand the scheme to include a further 3 units within the next 2 months. Agreement to the recommendations in this report will allow NBC to expand this project.

2.4 This report focuses on the needs of other single household client groups that are at risk of homelessness due to an institutionalised or care background

- a) Young people leaving care
- b) Ex offenders
- c) Mental health clients
- d) Learning difficulties clients

2.5 Clients in the above groups fall within the priority need categories of vulnerable homeless people and the council will have a duty to accommodate these clients. Provision of appropriately supported housing via the Homeless Prevention pathway will minimise the risk of clients repeating homelessness and subsequently making further applications to the Borough Councils housing resource.

2.6 Allocations of the 12 units should reflect the opportunities across the borough and take into account local residents and the needs of them.

### **3. Report Background**

#### **Aim of the Service**

3.1 The immediate aim of the service is to meet the interim needs of clients whilst they are awaiting an introductory tenancy from NBC. The support services will provide an appropriate level of support to enable service users to develop independent living skills. The Supporting People Team will prescribe the level of support for those providers that are key partners. Alternatively, Housing Services at NBC will agree the support level for non Supporting People Partners.

#### **3.2 Access to the Service**

NBC will build on early models of partnership working by establishing a “joint assessment” protocol with the support providers. This will include criteria for any client entering the scheme and checks will be made to ensure

- a) Client would be considered as in priority need by NBC
- b) Clients will be risk assessed and risk managed to standards set by NBC
- c) Properties are risk assessed according to client group.

NBC will also monitor and track outcomes via quarterly meetings with partner organisations.

#### **3.3 Supporting People Agenda**

NBC and NCC have worked jointly with the supporting people agenda and the Homelessness Prevention agenda and identified a need for more supported

housing within Northampton. This need is being addressed via a variety of methods (See Para 4 Options). The use of NBC stock as recommended in this report will ensure that the council can be responsive to specific client group needs.

### **3.4 The Legal Position**

The General consent from the Secretary of State enables NBC to dispose of up to 50 dwellings in a financial year on the following terms: -

- a) To either a registered social landlord or someone who intends to use the accommodation for occupation by persons with a special need.
- b) By lease not exceeding 21 years
- c) Must not be a tenanted property.

## **4. Options and Evaluation of Options**

4.1 This is one of several options available to NBC when looking to increase the amount and models of supported housing available for vulnerable clients. Other options will be considered within the Housing Strategy Action Plan and taken forward at a later stage. These include Hostel Improvement Plans and Specialist New build/refurbishment Housing Schemes.

## **5. Resource Implications (including Financial Implications)**

5.1 There are no extra resource implications. Existing employee resources will be used to draw up the leases; develop the protocols and monitor the schemes.

5.2 The rent charged under the lease agreement will be the usual Council rent and the Council's repairing obligations will be broadly the same as a normal letting.

## **6. Risk and Opportunity Issues**

6.1 Homelessness is costly to the council. The functions include the assessment of need, provision of temporary accommodation, administration of letting property and management of social housing.

6.2 Repeat homelessness therefore due to clients losing their home is to be avoided. Providing appropriately supported housing assists clients in maintaining a tenancy and proves successful in minimising financial and human cost of repeat homelessness.

6.3 Additionally social exclusion of specific vulnerable groups, leads to increased risk of social issues such as rough sleeping, anti social behaviour, criminal activity, which is costly for residents; individuals and environment.

**7. Consultees (Internal and External)**

<b>Internal</b>	<b>Legal Services: Asset Management Tenancy Management/Homelessness</b>
<b>External</b>	<b>Partner Organisations.</b>

**8. Compliance Issues**

**A: How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes**

<b>Recovery Plan</b>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>

**B: Other Implications**

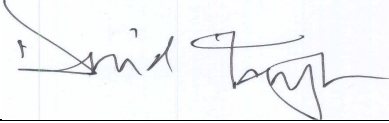
<b>Other Strategies</b>
<b>Housing Strategy Homeless Strategy Community Safety</b>

<b>Finance Comments</b>

<b>Legal Comments</b>

**9. Background Papers**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Homelessness Act 2002</b>		

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Ext.</b>
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<b>Corporate Manager</b>	Fran Rodgers		
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<b>Monitoring Officer or Deputy (Key decision only)</b>	<b>J.Inch</b>		
<b>Section 151 Officer or Deputy (Key decision only)</b>	Isabell Procter	<b>19.07.07</b>	